1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and women wear a curved sickle, thrust without a sheath into the sash round their waist at the back; but this instrument is of less general use than the men's knives, and women are frequently forced to borrow knives from men who are near them.

Far and away the most important single material for the Lepchas is the bamboo, or rather the numerous varieties of different bamboos that they grow and recognise. In the house bamboo is used for the floor, ceiling, walls and balcony; out of it water-carriers, and on occasion water conduits are made. The drinking vessels—*patyoot*—are made from ten-inch sections of old and hollow bamboo; each *patyoot* is cut off just below a joint, where the natural growth forms a bottom for the vessel. The principal beverage drunk from these *patyoot* is *chi*, a sort of beer which is formed by pouring boiling water on fermented grain; this is drunk through a 'straw'—*pa-hip*—which consists of a section of a small-growing bamboo with the pith at the end loosened so as to form a rude filter. Pins and brooches are made from bamboo; bows and arrows, the Lepcha's only hunting weapons, quivers and scabbards, all are made of different sorts of bamboo; and the catalogue could be continued almost endlessly. Finally the young bamboo shoots are good to eat, and the leaves are fed to temporarily restrained domestic animals, such as oxen when they are needed for ploughing.

The Lepchas of Zongu do not know how to make pottery. Plates are usually replaced by big leaves, but there are a certain number of rudely carved wooden plates which are used on ceremonious occasions, and a few metal and china dishes and containers which have been got by trading from Tibetans or bought in exchange for cardamum.

The Lepchas weave strong and regular mats and baskets out of the bark of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for a variety of purposes. This weaving is ideally men's work, as the weaving of thread is women's, but a certain number of women are as good mat-makers as any of the men, and there is felt to be no disgrace in employing articles made by women. During the summer months a mat called *tuk* is worn over the head as a protection against sun and rain; it is made of a double layer of finely woven bamboo filled with big leaves and has a rope in the centre to fasten it round the neck; it measures about three feet by four. Although the making of this article is considered to be specifically man's work, the best *tuk* in the village were said to be made by a woman, the mother of Gongyop.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

252 262 264 [272] cooking stones; it makes a greenish cake, or 'bread' as the Lepchas call it, of an astonishingly leathery consistency. On ordinary days, besides snacks, the Lepchas eat two meals; the bigger one in the morning, drunk with tea, Tibetan fashion, before going to work; and a second meal in the evenings with *chi* to accompany it.

● 273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according to the size of his offerings.

Chi can be prepared in about nine days, but it is stronger and [846] more appreciated if it is left to ferment longer. Specially strong *chi* is always prepared against a woman's lying-in and is given to her as a strengthening food for a month after delivery. To prepare *chi* the grain is first trodden to separate it from the husks and then put in a basket and well washed in a stream. A copper [415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary. When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken; the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is transferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

273 Nowadays nearly everybody buys yeast cakes in the bazaars, where they are sold very cheaply, but the old method of making the yeast is still known and employed by some of the older women. For five days before making the yeast the maker must not eat high meat or drink sour *chi* or the yeast will go bad; and it is thought that these prohibitions are the chief cause for people now buying it. The native yeast had six ingredients: the roots of two trees [624] which I could not identify, and the leaves of a gaultheria ground to powder mixed with powdered chilli and ginger and powdered millet and water. The whole is made into a cake and left to dry for three days.

All *chi* is not uniformly good; its goodness depends on the proportion of yeast and its proper distribution and the care taken in the arrangement of the basket. Some houses are noted for their consistently good or bad *chi*, the best being obtained from the Mandal's and Tafoor's and the worst at Jiroong's and, surprisingly enough, Datoop's. This is peculiar because both Mr. and Mrs. Datoop are very fond of *chi* and Mrs. Datoop is in all other respects the most obviously competent woman in the village. To prepare *chi* for drinking all that is necessary is to put the fermented grain into a bamboo container, *patyoot*, and upset boiling, or nearly boiling, water on to it; the liquid is drunk through [415] a specially narrow bamboo called *pahip*, which has one end cut so as to make a sort of filter to prevent the grains being sucked in at the same time as the liquid. The drink is quite pleasant, somewhat sweet and insidious; at a guess I should place the alcohol content at about the same as a strong beer or a light red wine. The *patyoot* is refilled with water at least three times and consequently the drink gets weaker as more is drunk. Until the water [431] is poured on the *chi* it is perfectly easy to handle and transport, and the presents of *chi* which take place on almost all formal occasions consist of a packet of the fermented grain wrapped in a cloth or held in a basket. Strained *chi*, which is the fermented grain given a single sousing of water and then drained in a wicker bag, is a delicacy and is very considerably stronger than the *chi* drunk through the straw. The Lepchas are also fond of *arak*, commercially distilled liquor, and usually buy it when they go to a place where it is obtainable.

Except in the poorest households, or on those occasions when one lot of *chi* has been exhausted and the next is not yet ready, adult Lepchas drink at least one *patyoot* of *chi* daily: if they did

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

not, they say, what would the poor pigs have to eat? Pigs are normally fed on the used grain, unless it is rice *chi*, when the soused grain is eaten by humans. The Lepchas believe that *chi* has medicinal qualities, and especially that it is a protection against chills; it is always given to invalids. They start drinking it from the moment that they can walk and continue all their lives. It does not seem to me to be strong enough to have any deleterious effect; except for very young children and a few unstable adults, *chi* does not produce any of the usual stigmata of drunkenness. Lepchas are very conscious of the risk of drink producing quarrelling; in the myth which tells of the origin of *chi*[6] the original yeast was stolen from an old woman who put the curse of quarrelsomeness on it. In point of fact I heard practically no quarrelling at feasts, though people became loud-mouthed, and more shameless in speech than ever, and a couple of men, Dumbi and Katel, used to get maudlin and say how miserable they were and threaten suicide. Unconsciousness induced by drink is unheard of, and so is physical incapacity; but at a feast people usually sleep where they are and only go home in the morning. Drink is mellowing, soothing and pleasant, rather than stimulating and exciting.

Fish is occasionally caught and eaten boiled, as a relish, but not very often. Meat is somewhat of a luxury, and on the whole people do not kill animals except as a sacrifice or when giving a big feast. There are, however, some exceptions to this; Tempa, who had a number of oxen and not very much grain, killed a couple of his cattle and exchanged the meat for the grain he needed. Fowls, wild birds and goat meat are eaten fresh; but beef and pork are preferred high; according to the weather the meat is kept from four days in the hottest season to a fortnight or longer in the coldest weather, before it is considered to be at its most tasty. Only if meat is maggoty will it be thrown away unused. Dead domestic animals and carrion found in the jungle will be eaten unless putrid. Meat is nearly always boiled; and sausages are made from the intestines of bigger animals which are cleaned and stuffed with the edible internal organs chopped fine together with flavouring herbs. These sausages are always made immediately after an animal has been killed. Another favourite form of relish is bullock skin which has been exposed to the sun and then boiled for a very long time until the inside fat is tender; it is eaten cold. There is a certain amount of variety in the manner

[6] See Appendix IV: The Sacred story of the origin of marriage.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

tively Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché (beloved teacher), or Tashey-*thing* has been equated with Tak-bo-*thing*, in Mun theology the first man and the first hero, the grandson of Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and the two change places in mythology, according to the preference of the speaker, even in stories quite unsuitable to lamaist ethics (for example in the stories of the origin of eating fish and pork, where the hero kills the original fish- or pig-devil). And the confusion does not end there; after Tak-bo-*thing* and Tashey-*thing* have been telescoped into one person they are again separated into two with two simultaneous births in different places: the Mun hero is said to have been born underground at the same moment as the lamaist saint was born in heaven.

These confusions however are more obvious to the analytical European than to the practising Lepcha. With the exception of the crucial point of killing animals the Lepchas do not appear to be conscious of the implied contradictions; and the lamas through their education in the scriptures and through the casting of horoscopes have already such a training in sophistry that they almost automatically reconcile any implicit contraditions. In by far the greater number of ceremonies for private individuals Mun and lamas perform simultaneously contradictory rites for identical ends, with the Mun usually in the 'kitchen' and the lamas in the 'parlour.' Inside the monastery precincts Mun are never allowed to practise; but in a number of the calendrical festivals on 'neutral' ground the two perform side by side. Only for one private ceremony are the Mun entirely excluded; they can take no part at all in the funeral ceremonies of a lama. On the other hand the Mun have the speciality of most of the ceremonies connected with crops and hunting and some apotropaic rites.

Theoretically there is no quarrel between the two religions, but there is a certain veiled rivalry between their priests. The lamas accuse the Mun of using their supernatural powers for unworthy private ends, for instance killing magically the spouses of people they desire so as to be able to enjoy them without interruption, and the Mun accuse the lamas of being more sensual than the average man, more dependent on constant sexual intercourse and drink; abstention is possible for the layman, intolerable for the lama. As far as drink is concerned I think the charge is justified; the amount of *chi* consumed by lamas is incalculable. As soon as they settle down for a ceremony a *patyoot* is placed beside them, and constantly refilled and renewed; the chanting—and lamaist

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

its base into the ground some way away from the grown-ups. It is quite a common sight to see little children who can hardly walk solemnly drinking their *chi* sitting in a circle round the communal cup. These babies quite often get rather drunk and flushed and hiccupy and unsteady on their legs and loud spoken; but this is usually followed very quickly by sleep and after a couple of hours they seem to wake up no whit the worse for their experience.

From about midday food is being served almost continuously; there seems practically no limit to what a Lepcha can eat and drink on a feast day. This is a typical menu of the food consumed per head between say, 11 o'clock in the morning and 9 o'clock at night at a good feast: 3 lbs. of rice served in two helpings; 3 *patyoot* of *chi* which were constantly replenished, and 3 cups of strained *chi* which is very much stronger and resembles a mild spirit; 2 double fistfuls of popped corn; about 2 lbs. of meat, one to eat and one raw piece to take home;[2] four helpings of tea; plenty of curry and vegetables with the rice and as much soup made from vegetables and stock as people cared to consume. For this feast every guest brought some contribution, but if the hosts had had to buy all the materials they provided the cost would have been at least Rs. 60 (about £5). This was considered a good party, but nothing extraordinary or out of the way.

All the time the feasting is going on the service continues intermittently; but there are intervals when the lamas come outside the monastery for a rest and to relieve themselves. Early in the day they wander down into the wood below the monastery, but later on, as they have eaten and drunk more, they just go to the edge of the built-up wall at the end of the monastery compound and squat down with their backs to the people. During these intervals also they shave one another's heads. Also from time to time they put their heads under a running stream to take away the fumes of the *chi*.

The rest of the people also get somewhat mellowed, though usually not noticeably drunk; I have never seen an adult Lepcha lose control of his movements through drink, though one or two of the older people get somewhat fogged in their speech. The younger women move about more than the others carrying the big ladles of boiling water to replenish the *chi* and handing out the food; they

[2] It is always the custom when the last dish is served at a Lepcha feast to put on top a portion of raw meat or sausage for the guest to take home and eat at leisure.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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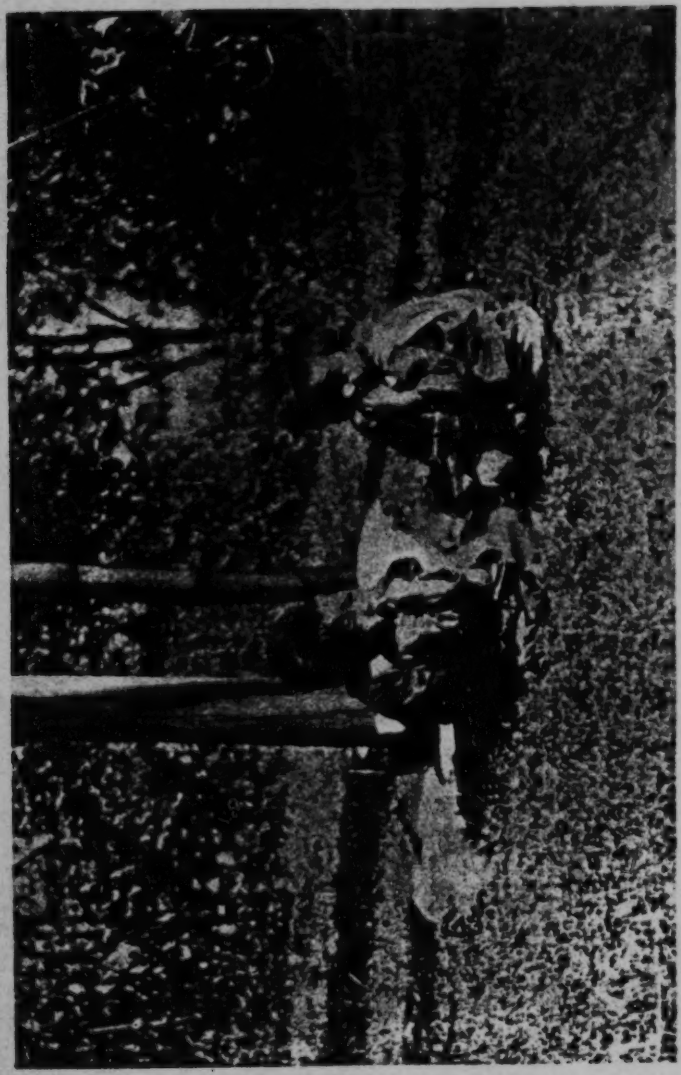

THE POT OF *CHI* FOR THE TODDLERS IS SET INTO THE GROUND WELL AWAY FROM THE GROWN-UPS

[facing p. 272]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

three days; on the fourth day I said "It is only fair we should take it in turns; I will take yours to-day and you take mine to-morrow." On the morrow I brought a leaf and shat on it and told the other to take it away. He refused, whereupon I said "If you won't throw it away it will stay there." After some argument the other threw it away and did not play tricks on me again.'

Relations with Mother.

'From time to time I used to go home and see Mother and help her and take her presents of the food and things I had saved at Passo's; they were rich, Mother was poor. Passo and his wife dressed me in second-hand clothes and gave me an old knife; they said I did not work well enough and cloth was too expensive to give me new clothes.

'When I was with Passo I was treated very badly, I had to do all the chores and work and was given bad food and no *chi*[7] while they sat at ease and ate and drank all day. When I was eight I was so unhappy that I ran away to my Mother; but she beat me and sent me back to my adopting parents. I ran away again when I was fifteen; this time Mother kept me nine days and then sent me back with a present of a load of *chi*.'

Onset of Padem Rum.

'When I was ten I was sent by Passo together with Cherim and Sanam to my Mother's father to fetch buckwheat. I was meant to carry twenty measures but could only manage fifteen. The two elder men were given *chi* and rice but I was merely given buckwheat cake. On the way home the Padem attacked me; I could not see properly and felt as though my body were being poked with sticks; I kept on thinking of drinking *chi* and eating rice like my companions had. I managed to get home with the buckwheat. My adopting parents did not look any bigger than myself.' (*For three months he was ill with constant derangements of vision.*) 'A chilli looked as big as a melon, a pumpkin looked like an umbrella. At times I felt as though I was flying or sitting on trees, at times my body felt as big as the monastery whereas other people seemed as small as twigs.

[7] Kurma used to get much more easily drunk than other Lepchas of his age, and I wonder whether this is due to the fact that he was not accustomed to *chi* in childhood.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 teacher and when this happens his father will beat him and send him back. A boy must study for three years before he can call himself a Yukman: but he is really no more than a probationer for several years to come. There is no examination at the end of the novitiate, but the pupil must be pronounced as fit by his master before proceeding further. Before a Yukman can be advanced in rank he must be passed as fit by the head of his monastery. This, however, is a mere matter of form and dependent entirely upon giving the necessary feasts. The position is almost exactly the same as that of the Oxford or Cambridge B.A., who has merely to pay a fee in order to become a Master of Arts: but in Lingtem the candidate is not required to pay in cash; he merely entertains the Senate to a feast of pork and drink.

As soon as a boy has finished his three years' course of study he is presented to the local monastery by two Lamas, for [431] whom he provides food and drink. In return they give him a ceremonial scarf and a present of one rupee. There is no actual ceremony, but this exchange of gifts constitutes the novice's graduation as a *Chap-dibu*, the lowest rank of Lama. He has no priestly functions and is little more than a servant to the other Lamas during such times as they are present at the monastery, seeing that their drinking cups are kept replenished, sweeping out the building and performing other such menial tasks. A *Chap-dibu* must remain about three years in this and each subsequent rank before he can be advanced, the next stage being known as *Tong-pŏn-bu*. To attain this rank the Lama must provide a feast of one pig, [273] eighty pounds of specially prepared dry millet for making *Chi*, the universal drink of Sikkim, and eighty pounds each of rice and parched rice. A *Tong-pŏn-bu* is not permitted to read from books during monastic ceremonies, but he may now [534] play on conch shells. He may also blow the funnel-shaped hautboy called *Galing*, also the long ten-foot trumpets, *Rukdung*, and the flutes, made from human thigh-bones known as *Kongling*. When playing on the conch shell he may, if he wishes, wear a special red cap called *Tongyo*. Should the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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On the left the oldest man in Lingtem, who claims to be over ninety, with Chötembu's wife.

[778]

The *Hlaribu*, or local artist-Lama. The objects on the left are small revolving prayer-drums.

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415]

The method of drinking *chi*. The special hat which the man is wearing is made of plaited bamboo, and is only worn when hunting. It is not often seen nowadays.

[facing p. 106]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house, on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

24th March:

We went this morning to watch a house being re-roofed. It belonged to Pemba, Pichi's Lama brother. When we arrived at about nine o'clock some twenty men, including a number of Lamas, were already putting on new rafters. Only two women were present: Pemba's wife and mother; but others will turn up later, to help in the actual thatching. No payment is made to the helpers; but in addition to being fed while they are working they are given a feast on the conclusion of the work.

Women started to arrive about ten o'clock, and at once started to light fires and prepare the gargantuan meal which seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); but as soon as the women arrived sex was, as usual, the chief topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof, so that men working below could pass personal remarks on such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say, however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted. This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth, which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray, together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given something to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 carry the necessary loads, so that the whole party forms quite an imposing gathering. It takes with it one complete pig's carcass, a full load of chi-millet and sixteen pounds of rice, half of which should be parched.

When the procession arrives within about half a mile of the bridegroom's home two boys are sent out to meet it. They take with them two bamboos of *chi*. One of these is given to the *Rum fat-bo*, and the other to the *Aku*. They first offer a little to the gods, after which the rest is distributed and consumed on the spot. In the meantime the two boys run back as hard as they can go and give warning that the procession is approaching.

[343 [415 ● 273] A small shed, known as *Gor shun*, has been previously constructed outside the house and a number of bamboo containers filled with *chi* are now placed ready inside it. The bridal party is escorted straight to the *Gor shun*, where it immediately consumes the *chi* without further ceremony; the idea being to make all concerned a little intoxicated as quickly as possible, in order to make the party go with a swing. A light meal is now served, and a special pot of ceremonial unstrained *chi*, known as *Chi-lok*, is offered. This is covered with a cloth, and after being ceremonially offered is taken away again inside the house. It is not drunk and is used for libations to the gods.

As soon as the party has rested a little it is escorted inside the house, where the guests, usually the whole of the village, have already gathered and are probably no longer sober. [788] Each member of the party prostrates himself three times in front of the altar; after which all sit down on the floor, ranging themselves in a line along one wall, the bridegroom's attendants being seated along the opposite wall.

While a Mun is making a sacrifice to the family gods and demons of the girl's family in one room, the ceremony of handing the bride over takes place in another. For this purpose the respective *Pi-bos* stand up facing one another in front of the altar, but everyone else remains seated on the floor.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

587 in Lingtem, is being married to-day. His first wife died a year ago, and he is now marrying a childless widow of twenty-four. It seems that in the eyes of the village he has 177 struck lucky; for in normal circumstances it is not considered auspicious for a girl to marry a widower. In this particular case, however, the girl's deceased husband had no brothers; nor was anyone else entitled to inherit her, so the present arrangement suits both parties. The only fly in to-day's 781 ointment is that the birth-signs of the bride and bridegroom are antagonistic; so much so, in fact, that many people think the marriage foredoomed to failure. Ongden, however, is quite well-off, and in any case, being himself a Lama, can probably obtain special terms from the faculty for the services which will restore the balance of ill-luck. But in view of the special circumstances both he and his bride think the risk worth taking.

587 We were summoned to the house at nine-thirty, but noth-
273 ing much was happening when we arrived. We went first to the kitchen, where some thirty or forty people were sitting quietly soaking, after which we were shown into the altar-room, where the actual ceremony will take place. Six Lamas were sitting against the wall: they too were drinking. The second Dorje-Lopön appeared to be in charge, and the others all had 534 instruments, the usual six-foot trumpets, clarionets and drums.

778 On the altar were a number of *tormas* of rice, decorated
587 with dabs of coloured butter. Into these were stuck several rather crudely coloured pictures of gods, the centre one of which was said to represent Guru Rimpoche. Behind these one of the usual Tibetan pictures had been hung; but it was so old and tattered as to make its details unrecognisable. There was also a small brass vessel filled with holy water, into the neck of which a peacock's feather had been stuck; also a beer bottle, said to contain spirits. I also noticed a number of small bowls filled with rice and other grains, and several oranges and a heap of walnuts. In front of all was a row of 573 small lamps, the last of which was only lighted when the bride arrived.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some ¼ are supposed to be antidotes against [752]
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks, [37]
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora*.

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

¼ [i.e., wooden cups.—Analyst]

539

En Ye!	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Mo-tan-chi Roñ kup dun non bin	We were made along with the *so-la-non* bamboos
So-li-non po-bong yit duk luñ su	And the *ar-tsam* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [1])
Ar-tsam po-niy duk kun su pa-t'or boñ	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Yil duk kung su Roñ kup gum yoñ t'u t'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *marwa* millet beer [2]).

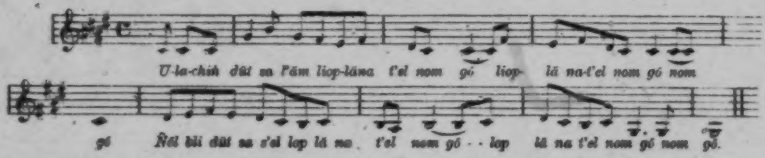
[574] [273]

III.

U-la-duñ dût.

A love lament.

[533]


U-la-chiñ dût su Pâm liop-lâna t'el nom gó liop- lâ na-t'el nom gó nom
gó Ñôl bli dût su t'el lop lâ na t'el nom gó - - lop lâ na t'el nom gó nom gó.

U-la duñ dût su-l'âm liop-lâ na-t'el nom gó.	I (am) a maiden [3]), like an unopened bud [4]).
Ñôl-bli dût su-t'el " " " "	Like a supple shuttle [5]).
Sak la lyan t'u fak-nak " " " "	Like a whirling spindle [6]).
Ka-fer li-vun nak wât liop-lâ dût mât nom gó.	I stand a maiden, like a twirling spinning thread.
S'or la tak-kat su-t'el " " " " "	Like a bright golden tassel.
Mît tak-gum dût-mât nom " " " " "	A maiden stand (forlorn) behind.
S'ung fo t'ot ta-bîl-la liop-lâ na-t'el nom gó.	I (am) a maiden like a tender coiled bud.
Tak-mak fo t'ot nak nân " " " "	Like a sorrowing *S'uk* bird.
Sâk la ma run na mo " " " "	Like a loudly lamenting Takmok bird.
Lok la ma run na mo " " " "	I feel very sad!

IV.

The Pangs of Love.

Chin-cho-ne tak-nak buk go ma t'âm na-gañ	Though I tasted not the wild *chin-cho-ne* yam [7])
Kyok-rio-lo lat duk S-tim-bu lât nen-ni	I feel great pain in my *kyok-rio-lo* heart.

[824] [231] [415]

[1]) *Po-sher* is a small reedy bamboo, grass which is a favorite fodder for cattle. The largest bamboo from which pitchers are made is „*Po*" or „*Pon*" (*Dendrocalamus Hamiltonii*, Nees & Arnott). It is often 6 to 8 inches in diameter.

[2]) This beer brewed from the fermented seed of millet (*Eleusine coracana*) is served out in bamboo-pitchers or *poñ-t'ut*, from which it is sipped up through a thin bamboo tube called *poñ-bis*, so called, because it is scraped and polished, from *po*, a bamboo and *bip*, to scrape.

[3]) Literally „Sister".

[4]) The folded bud of a growing shoot, such as the plantain or banana (*Musa sapiens*).

[5]) *Ñol-bît*, a weaving rod.

[6]) *Sam-t'u*.

[7]) *Tak-nak-buk* or „Forest yam". This is a very deeply set wild yam, growing 4 to 6 feet below surface and is only to be dug up with great labour.

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to an irregular marriage, Rum decided that the marriage ceremonies should be observed. Milletbeer and ferment play an important part in these ceremonies. After the institution of the marriage ceremonies in this manner, the first men could contract a permitted marriage between brother and sister and their children are human beings.

The same story of procuring a ferment for Chi is told by Bong-thing Gu-gu in Git-biyong. Also another myth which we have discovered throws light on the relationship between men and demons: Ti-gung-thik and Ni-gung-ngal had a son. The demon, Susu-mung, also had a son. Both of these children were on the point of dying; and while they were breathing their last, two birds were sent to fetch the Water of Life and the Water of Death as medicine. The birds obtained both, but exchanged the medicines on their return flight. They gave the human child the Water of Death and it died. The child of the demon received the Water of Life and escaped death. Thus it is that demons still continued to plague men. Men made an effort to annihilate the demon, and when it had climbed a high tree one day they pulled the tree down and knocked the demon to pieces. Nevertheless, as the demon had tasted the Water of Immortality, the fragments of his body were transformed into flies, mosquitoes and other dangerous insects which continue to plague mankind.[41]

An old Lepcha, Sam-sing, from Maria-Basti told me this story: All men have descended from common parents. The first parents had three sons. The first was called Lapche and was the father of the Lepcha tribe. The second is the father of the Rai, and the third the father of the Meche. In the course of their wanderings the brothers came across a banana palm. The eldest brother stuck his knife into it with the intention of cutting it down. White water flowed out of the wound. "If that is the case, we shall not stay any longer with you," said the two brothers and they left him and went their way. The two then came across a Gommim leaf. The second brother cut the leaf and the cut turned black. Thereupon the youngest brother said to him, "If

41. cfr. a similar myth of Stocks, op. cit., p. 384.

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river. The bath consists of a complete immersion. After the last bath he comes into the house to perform the sacrifice.

An altar about 80 centimetres high is erected, and bananas and roots which serve as offerings are placed on it. Flowers are placed on either side. This sacrifice takes place in September. Many people assemble for it, and they later partake of food and millet beer.

One kind of sacrifice consists simply of the action of the man, who before drinking either millet beer or tea, sprinkles some drops with his fingers.[72]

(j) Parallels to the myths and the ritual of the Rong

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The intoxicating drink plays an important part in all the sacrifices offered by the Rong. One kind is Chi, a brew of millet. The second is Dyō, an alcoholic drink, which is made not of millet but of different components. In all the sacrificial texts and rites a special importance is attached to this stimulant. As the text indicates, there is an individual deity personifying the intoxicating drink, *viz.* Dōn-dyō-chi-log, who is also represented among the Tormas and is rendered the same homage as the Supreme God and his family. This intoxicating drink according to the tradition of the Rong is of heavenly origin. Tradition has it that at the very outset the ferment used in the manufacture of the intoxicant was brought to mankind from the other side of the world in a cunning manner by a special messenger. Immortality, too, is linked up with this drink. Birds have a special part to play in connection with both these drinks. The quail is considered to have performed the Chi sacrifice after the deluge. Two birds are said to have fetched the drink of immortality from the land of the gods. Then a two-fold effect which causes merriment is described. When the snakes drank Chi, they went mad. To quote Stocks, "You have stolen my ferment, if you only know how to use it, you would be able to offer the 'chi' to the Rum, but now you will find that it always excites you, it will cause you all to quarrel, it may even perhaps kill you.

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72. Cfr. op. cit. p. 248.

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273 796 But the wasp started to make 'chi' as he brought the ferment back, and all the Rum came but none dared taste it, as they did not know what would happen to the first one who drank.

Then the pa-vin-bu volunteered to try it first (and he is the snake who springs from trees). As soon as he had drunk a little, he became mad, and commenced to fly, and some of his friends went to look after him. They found however that he was not dying, and another snake—one that is black, the pa-mol-bu, drank and also became mad. He went into a cave and some of his friends went in to look after him but they found he was only snoring.

Then a third snake—one that is poisonous, the pa-hlyok-bu, volunteered. He drank the 'chi' and went away vomiting, and ever since that day he is more poisonous.

Then a fourth offered to taste it—the horned one that has a red head and a black body (tik). She had some and only ran away drunken.

After that there came another snake—the pa-zyob-bu, who only lives in the hills—and when he had gone everyone thought they might try as the poison had by now all gone."[73]

796 273 For the snakes or demons, this drink has deleterious effects : for the gods however it is a refreshing drink. Through the Chi sacrifice, *i.e.* through the enjoyment of the intoxicating drink, they become softened and quiet. To cite an instance: the god in his rage made the flood come down; then softened through the sacrifice of Chi, he let the waters abate. In the traditions of the Rong we do not come across evidences of a god who becomes exhilarated through drinking of the love-potion, as is the case with Indra on drinking Soma.

[791] The magicians work themselves into a frenzy by partaking of Chi, in order to reach a state of ecstasy. The Chi sacrifice is most closely connected with the bull, and is performed on the head of the animal. The sacrificial vessel containing the drink must always be decorated with three little pats of butter.

The Chi sacrifice has an entirely original and individual character and is closely bound up with the life and the ritual

73. Stocks, op. cit. p. 383.

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of the Rong. It belongs therefore to their old ancestral estate, and is not borrowed from other peoples. 273 796

In the Soma-Haoma sacrifices of the Indians and the Iranians, we find striking parallels. "The conception of a stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to the Indo-European times. The drink which manifests secret, ecstatic, and exciting power to men, must be an essence of the gods, and a special possession of the gods... The dwelling place of this drink of the gods appears to have been heaven according to Indo-European beliefs.... From its heavenly storage place, the bird of the god, or the god himself in the guise of a bird, fetched or stole it from the jealously watching demons; the eagle of Indra; the nectar carrying eagle of Zeus; Odin who as an eagle carried away mead.... Finally it may perhaps be accepted, that the conception of godlike immortality is already connected at the time of the Indo-Europeans with the drink of the gods (Amrta, Ambrosia). As human life is preserved by taking meat and drink and specially death is warded off for a time, at least by medicine, so must the godly existence also depend on the partaking of a drink whose essence is immortality."[74] [171]

The sacrifice as the nourishment of the gods is known to the Rong. "Then Tashey-takbo-thing wished to make his first sacrifice to the Rum and called the ngo and the ngo-yong.... 796 782 773

At the offering time the hands and feet of the Tashey-takbo-hing quarrelled with his belly saying, 'We work very hard the whole time, but you, the belly, do nothing.' And the belly replying said, 'Very well then, as you believe that, for two or three days I shall really do nothing. I will rest and shall not eat anything.'

Then the hands became so weak they could do nothing, and were soon unable to move. And the belly said, 'If you find me something to eat, you will find you regain strength and vigour.' And as he ate a little the hands and feet regained strength, and they knew they were defeated. So they planted sugar-cane (mut pa-mam), pine-apples (bor-pot) and all kinds of fruit which grew abundantly.

74. H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, Stuttgart-Berlin 1917, p. 160 sq.

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And Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits with many fish from the river and sacrificed them. This was the commencement of all offering."[78]

Thus among the Rong, as among the Indo-Iranians the stimulating drink, finally becomes a deity. "Further, the sacrificial drink filled with daemonic strength,—like the sacrificial fire—has become a mighty god."[78a]

But Soma-Haoma is however most intimately bound up with cattle. "Soma is dressed in the cow robe—the admixture of milk in it."[78a] We noticed, among the Rong, the butter decoration on the bowl of Chi.

Significant also is the rite by which the Lepchas place the offering of Chi on the forehead of the bull, and so bind more closely together the cult of the stimulant with cattle. All the same both cults remain autonomous and independent. This is of special value as it throws more light on the old Indo-Iranian ritual and sacrifices. Some scholars today think it is possible to connect the following :

"The cult of the killing of the Soma in the form of little plant shoots in the Vedic sacrifice and the myth of the killing of the Haoma bull in the mythology of Mithra have a broad ethnological connection, and are the Aryan shaping of an ancient prehistorical mythology and cult....Now if Zarathustra repeatedly declaims with passion and holy anger against the slaughtering of bulls it is not, as has been maintained, for agricultural and utilitarian reasons, but because this ritual act formed the essential constituent part of the old religion. Now within the Soma sacrifice, the highest and most solemn sacrifice of the old Indians, it is clear that the offering of a gift to the gods was not the most essential thing, but the renewal of the original sacrifice of the gods. As the gods in heaven prepare the Soma rain for the good of the world, so does man in the holy ceremony prepare the drink of immortality which stands for rain as the source of life, in order to share in the blessing of the godlike original sacrifice and to make sure of it for himself. And for all the slaughtering of beasts and men, which

78. Stocks, op. cit. p. 388.
78. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 172.
78a. op. cit. p. 178.

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Chi, rouse themselves into a state of ecstasy, and then began their dances and their soul-wanderings in a state of ecstasy.

A brief description of the manner in which the Rong prepare the intoxicating drink would not be out of place here. Chi is obtained from the small millet. The well-ripened grains are dried in the sun for three days, and then cooked in an earthenware pot which is covered over with a bamboo mat. A larger barrel is inverted over this. After the cooking, the ferment is added, and the fermentation begins. The fermented liquor is left in the sun for several days so that the alcoholic content may become stronger. Finally the grains are squeezed out and the chi-brew is thus obtained. The fermenting grains are then put into a bamboo barrel and warm water is poured over them. This water becomes slightly alcoholic and is sucked in through a little bamboo tube. The method of drinking beer through a little bamboo tube, in order to avoid the impure sediment, is a very old custom indeed, and had been practised by the Hitties. It is a universal practice among the Himalayan peoples.

The other type of alcoholic beverage, Dyō, is made from medicinal roots, herbs, or other fermentable plants. The preparation would depend on the material used in each case. The roots are soaked in warm water, the fermenting agent is added and the whole concoction allowed to ferment. After a few days the molasses is squeezed out. It seems that the preparation of the Soma was similar, but the secret of the extraction has been lost.

The home of the Soma plants is supposedly the high rocky mountains. "Soma on the rocks"[79]; the eagle robs Soma from the rocks.[80] It is "an inhabitant of the mountains," a "growth of the mountain world."[81] In one place the name for such a mountain is said to be Mujevat.[82] According to the Mahabharata (XIV) this was a mountain to the rear of the Himalayas. The plant was also a medicine and was called "Medicine for the sick."[83] The medicinal effect was so

79. Rigveda V, 85, 2.
80. op. cit. I, 93, 6.
81. X, 68, 4; XV, 9, 95, 4.
82. X, 34, 1.
83. Rigveda VIII, 72, 17.

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potent that it even brought about immortality.[84] The motif of "Medicine of Immortality" which is widely circulated through the whole of Asia is an effective argument in this case. According to this, Soma was a kind of medicinal plant which grew in the highest mountains.

In those early days, no Indo-Aryans lived in this mountain world. It is more probable that from the very early time they obtained medicinal roots and herbs from the inhabitants of the mountains. In the Atharvaveda it is said, "The young maid of the Kirati race, a young damsel, digs the drug ; digs it with shovels wrought of gold on the high ridges of the hills."[85] The Kirati however are a people related to the Tibetans, as we shall see later on, and their name is identical with the Rai as we have mentioned above. The expression "kirata-tikta" occurs in Sanskrit and means "A very bitter medicinal plant." The name is preserved in the Prakrit as Cilaa-itta or Ciraa-itta ; in Old-Bengal as Cirayita and in New-Bengal as Cirata or Cireta. It certainly means "Medicine of the Kirata."[86] The Soma plant and its juice were equally bitter. It is reported that the Kirati provided the Aryans with Soma plants. If they grew in the high Himalayan mountains there was certainly no other way of obtaining the plants except through the natives who had a knowledge of medicinal herbs.

It is naturally impossible to produce a commonly used popular drink from a rare plant which had to be transported from a great distance. Oldenberg raises the same question from an altogether different point of view, "Has Soma ever been a favourite drink in the daily life of the Aryans? I doubt it...In the Veda, Soma certainly was not a favourite drink, and it seems to me that the Avestic sources also teach this. The real intoxicating drink in the ordinary life of the ancient Indian peoples was sura...

Sura was put to sacred use at the ceremonies of the Sautramani as also of the Vajaya."[87] Even the Soma sacrifices were not numerous, or greater quantities of Soma plants would

84. op. cit. I; 91, 6; VIII, 48, 3; IX, 113, 8.
85. S. K. Chatterji, Kirata-Jana-Krti, Journal R. A. S. B. Vol. XVI, 1950. No. 2. p. 162.
86. op. cit. p. 163.
87. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 366.

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●273 171 have been used. "Only for a few, the celebrations of the Soma sacrifice could have been possible; where it was celebrated it could only have had for the masses of the people at most, the character of an incomprehensible play which they watched; the functions leaving the onlookers unmoved."[88] A drink so easily obtained and in general use, would not have so easily been linked with the "Drink of Immortality."

The Soma plants were ground down according to primitive methods on a stone plate by means of a stone, and later crushed in a stone mortar.[89] Then the juice was squeezed out. This juice was of a brownish, reddish, or greeny-yellowish colour. To purify this juice it was run through a strainer made of sheep's wool.[90] The Iranians used a strainer made of hair from the holy white bull. During the process three priests chant a monotonous hymn. The juice was very frequently mixed with water, milk or sour milk.[91]

It was poured back and forth into different barrels. All the manipulations would certainly cause the fermentation of the juice, as it did have an intoxicating effect.[92]

All this goes to show that Soma was quite a rare intoxicating drink. The ordinary intoxicant of the ancient Indians was Sura, which was also used for the purpose of the sacrifice. Here, too, we have an exact parallel with the Lepchas;—millet beer, Chi, is the ordinary stimulant which is generally used for the sacrificial purpose as it is easily obtained. Dyō is made from medicinal roots and is of a brownish colour. The alcohol content is high like some of our modern liqueurs. Because of the rarity of the roots, Dyō is not often manufactured and is less frequently used in sacrifices. Soma must have been extracted from some similar medicinal root. The Himalayan peoples gave it to the Aryans and handed over to them the recipe for making it.

This of course does not prove that the sacrifice of the intoxicating drink was introduced by the Aryans in this manner.

88. op. cit. p. 440 sq.
89. Rigveda IX. 67, 19, 107, 10; I, 28, 1-3
90. Rigveda IX. 69, 9.
91. Rigveda VII. 3, 6.
92. Cfr. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 457 sq., S. K. Godivala, Indo-Iranian Religion, Bombay, 1925, p. 6. sq.

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"The idea of the stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to Indo-European times."[93] There it was the old honey mead. Instead of mead the Aryans used Soma when they settled in India which they came to know through the Himalayan peoples, among whom intoxicating drinks had a similar significance.

The present day customs and practices of the Lepchas are a commentary on the old customs. Among all the Southern Himalayan peoples the Lepchas, as far as we could see, were the only ones who have knowledge of the plant and know the art of making the intoxicating drink from it. The Tibetans call the drink of immortality "dud-rtzi"; it is nectar or ambrosia. Literally it means the devil's drink. They use the name ho-ma by which they mean a butter-burnt-offering; ho-ma-byed-pa means, usually, to offer. The Tibetans say "ho-ma" which is related to the Iranian "haoma" and not to the Sanskrit "soma"; moreover the expression "devil's juice" is a defamatory appellation. Exactly the same did Zarathustra with the Haoma drinking bout. These two facts seem to indicate that the Tibetans have in this, as in many other ways, imbibed the Iranian heritage.

The sagas of the Great Flood offer us another parallel. We can differentiate two main motifs; *a*) the cause of the flood, *viz.* the damming of the waters by the snake king, and *b*) the freeing of the waters when the demon was smashed to pieces and the saving of the human couple.

The Rong relate the following: "Then Paril-bu, who was the Serpent-king, dammed the rivers by lying in them, and they overflowed and rose to a great height and reached the sky... Tashey-thing sent a hero down into the world called the Yong-li-pone to kill the serpent who was blocking the rivers. The hero cut the serpent in pieces, thus making the waters run down the plains."[94]

Veda (I·32) describes how Vrtra, the snake demon, closed the passage of the waters so that they could not flow away. Indra came to battle, overwhelmed the snake-demon

93. H. Oldenberg, op. cit. p. 160.
94. Stocks, op. cit. p. 358.

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illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 452.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.